



NAVY NEWS



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Forward ... from the Sea

February 25, 2000

“Super Hornet” OPEVAL results announced

By OASD(public affairs)

WASHINGTON (NNS) — The Navy announced Feb. 16 the results of the F/A-18E/F Super Hornet operational evaluation (OPEVAL). The OPEVAL report awarded the best possible grade to the Super Hornet, calling it “operationally effective and operationally suitable.” In addition, the report recommended the aircraft’s introduction into the fleet.

Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. Jay Johnson, stated “The F/A-18E/F Super Hornet is the cornerstone of the future of naval aviation. The superb performance demonstrated throughout its comprehensive operational evaluation was just what we expected and confirms why we can’t wait to get it to the fleet!”

Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (VX) 9 at China Lake, Calif., flew 1,233 hours in more than 850 sorties, expending more than 400,000 pounds of ordnance in the Super Hornet during nearly six months of flights. The 23-member aircrew tested the aircraft in a complex variety of tactical missions representing the operational arena.

The Navy’s Program Executive Officer for Tactical Aircraft Programs, Rear Adm. Jeffrey A. Cook, commented, “This is the best news the Navy’s carrier forces have received in a long time. It will ensure that throughout the next 20 years the fleet will be capable of countering the evolving

threat. My congratulations to the Navy’s Operational Test and Evaluation Command, the men and women of VX-9, and the entire naval aviation systems team.”

The purpose of the OPEVAL was to test the aircraft in a realistic fleet setting to determine its operational effectiveness as a weapon system, and its suitability to be maintained and operated by the Navy. No new deficiencies were

found and the report validated the aircraft’s superior capabilities.

“I’m really excited about the results,” said Capt. James B. Godwin III, F/A-18 program manager. “We got the best grade possible from OPEVAL — operationally effective and operationally suitable. This report confirmed that the Super Hornet is a very mature product. We have been recommended for full fleet introduction.”

The OPEVAL report specifically cited the aircraft’s key enhancing features — growth, bringback, survivability, range and payload — as qualities relative to current fleet operational capabilities. The successful completion of OPEVAL continues the Super Hornet along the road to a milestone III decision, and then approval to start full-rate production and multi-year procurement.

Go Navy!



Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable Richard Danzig, presents the Secretary’s Trophy to Navy Football captains Terrence Anderson and Jamie Doffermyre at a Feb. 18 lunchtime ceremony in King Hall at the Naval Academy. Also accepting the trophy is Navy Football coach Charlie Weatherbie. The Secretary’s Trophy, established in 1987 by the respective Secretaries of the Navy and Army, is awarded annually to the winner of the Army-Navy football game. Navy won this year’s contest in Philadelphia by a score of 19-9.

U.S. Navy photo.

DoD officials disagree with House report on anthrax

By Staff Sgt. Kathleen T. Rhem, USA, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON (NNS) — Department of Defense (DoD) officials recently said they had no intention of ending their program of mandatory anthrax vaccinations for service members, despite a House of Representatives panel's recommendation that the program should be suspended.

"The Department of Defense is very confident in the anthrax program that we have undertaken," said Dr. Sue Bailey, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, at a Pentagon briefing Feb. 17. "We have a very safe and effective vaccine against a very deadly biologic agent that we know to

be in the hands of many of our adversaries.

"Were [service members] not vaccinated and exposed to this agent, they would die a horrible death. It is our mission to protect those forces," Bailey said.

A critical report released Feb. 17 by the Government Reform Committee's National Security subcommittee stated the military's program to inoculate all 2.4 million troops against anthrax was based on "dangerously narrow scientific" evidence. The panel recommended the vaccination program be suspended and the vaccine be considered experi-

mental.

The Pentagon's top bio-defense official, Marine Maj. Gen. Randy L. West, said he was disappointed by much of what was in that report. West is the special advisor to the Secretary of Defense for anthrax and bio-defense affairs.

"There are a lot of allegations in there that I believe were appropriately answered during the seven hearings that we had on this issue last year," West said, referring to congressional hearings on the anthrax vaccination program held in September and October 1999. "I believe if

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Sea tour lengths reduced for 101 rates

By Chief of Naval Personnel Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (NNS) — A recent reduction in sea-shore rotation tour lengths is the latest in a string of initiatives designed to improve the quality of life for Sailors and their families.

NAVADMIN 026-00 cuts back the amount of time spent at sea for 101 rates, and increases sea tours for 43 rates, most of which are shore intensive.

"The Navy is doing its best to ensure we successfully meet our commitments," said Vice Adm. Norb Ryan Jr., Chief of Naval Personnel. "At the same, we need to make sure the quality of service is the best it can be."

Recent efforts to balance sea-shore rotation (SSR), include the January 1999 SSR Conference, recruiter billet changes and E-6 shore billet roll-downs to sea intensive E-5 rates.

Over 4,900 billets have been transferred between sea and shore intensive rates over the last 18 months to better balance sea tour lengths for all rates. The number of rates with a 48-month tour or longer has decreased from 53 to 37.

For more information see NAVADMIN 026-00 on the BUPERS web site <http://www.bupers.navy.mil/>.

Sailors are Navy's top priority, CNO tells Congress

By CNO Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (NNS) — Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jay L. Johnson testified on the Navy's Fiscal Year 2001 budget request before the House Armed Services Committee Feb. 10.

During his opening statement, the CNO thanked the committee members for supporting the improved pay and benefits that took effect in January, and reiterated that taking care of Sailors is still the Navy's top priority in the short-term.

"We must continue to convey to them in word and deed that our country truly depends on them for its security, and we treasure their service and sacrifice," Johnson said.

The CNO told the

committee that in addition to compensation, next year's budget needs to address the concerns Sailors have about the military health care system.

"We must sharpen our focus on health care issues, to include taking care of the over-65 retirees to whom we owe so much."

During the question and answer session, the CNO added that the question is not whether health care benefits need to be improved for retirees over the age of 65, but rather how such improvements can be put in place.

"We have got to do this," Johnson said. "And I think it's a national commitment that we must all share together and work as hard as

we can to put the ship right."

According to the CNO, the Navy's number one long-term priority is still building enough ships and aircraft to recapitalize the force.

"[We need] ships and aircraft in sufficient numbers to ensure our operational primacy throughout this century," said the Navy's top uniformed officer.

The CNO told the committee members that the Navy remains busy.

"We still have half our Navy underway and a third of our Navy forward-deployed every day. They maintain a high tempo of operations while we remain within our six-month portal-

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Make your vote count — State primaries just ahead

By *Ens. Eric Petersen, NAVPERSCOM Public Affairs*

MILLINGTON, Tenn. (NNS) — The bulk of state primary elections for federal and state officials will be conducted Mar. 7 through Nov. 14, and service members and their families are encouraged to take part in the election process.

Although many Sailors and their families are assigned far from their home of record, they are still able to exercise their right to vote using absentee ballots and the

Navy's Voting Assistance Program.

The Voting Assistance Guide and your command Voting Assistance Officer (VAO) can assist you in registering and requesting a ballot using the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) Standard Form 76. Completing the FPCA and sending it to your local voting jurisdiction is all that it takes. Postage is not required if you mail the application from within the

United States, an FPO or APO mail facility, or a U.S. embassy or consulate.

The best time to apply for an absentee ballot is 30-45 days before an election. In most states, ballots are mailed to voters 20 days before an election.

Remember, by exercising your right to vote you are helping to choose people who make decisions that will affect your life. Make your vote count!

For more information: See your command VAO or call the Navy Voter Hotline (Mon - Fri, 0800 - 1630, CST).

In the continental U.S. (except Tennessee)

1-800-368-5056

In Tennessee and overseas, to include Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands

DSN 882-4369 or
(901) 874-4369

For the dates of your state's primary, see NAVADMIN 028/00 or visit the Navy Voting Assistance Program web site at <http://www.persnet.navy.mil/pers66/nvap>.

Navy establishes NAVSOUTH

By *CINCLANTFLT Public Affairs*

ROOSEVELT ROADS, Puerto Rico (NNS) — The Navy has established United States Naval Forces Southern Command (NAVSOUTH), the Navy component of the military's United States Southern Command (SOUTHCOM). The new organization will be commanded by Rear Adm. Kevin Green and headquartered in Puerto Rico.

Green will be responsible for Navy operational forces in the United States Southern Command's area of responsibility (AOR). He will oversee U.S. naval forces participating in drug enforcement operations and interaction with South American naval forces, including the annual UNITAS operations around South America.

As the Navy's senior representative, Green will serve as the principal liaison with the government of Puerto Rico. As such, Green will work closely with government officials to implement President Clinton's Directive regarding resumption of naval exercises on the island of Vieques.

NAVSOUTH consolidates the responsibilities of the recently disestablished Commander, Western Hemisphere Group and Commander, South Atlantic.

Further information can be obtained at <http://www02.clf.navy.mil/usnavso>.

With honor and respect



An officer aboard USS *Enterprise* (CVN 65) renders a salute in respect to the deceased during a burial-at-sea ceremony. *Enterprise* is in the Atlantic Ocean conducting carrier qualifications. U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate Airman Carolla V. Bennett.

USS Mitscher mentors Sailors from day one

By SURFLANT Public Affairs

NORFOLK, Va. (NNS) — USS *Mitscher* (DDG 57) has put a whole new perspective on being part of a team.

In an effort to take care of newly reporting Sailors and ensure they understand the ship's mission and high standards, the ship has developed an indoctrination program — Damage Control University (DCU) — helping the Sailor learn the ropes while becoming an effective member of the team.

This two-week program ends with a ceremony that replaces the Sailor's generic NAVY ball cap with an authentic *Mitscher* ball cap symbolizing their qualification as part of the team.

Mitscher's DCU is geared toward efficiently training new sea duty Sailors on basic damage control qualifications as soon as possible.

"The courses we teach range from basic damage control, communications, fire fighting and first aid, and ends with chemical, biological and radiological warfare protection," said Hull Technician 2nd Class(SW) Marcus Womble. "Those are the most important things for people to learn as soon as they get here."

Typically, fleet Sailors have 90 days on board to get basic damage control qualifications completed independently. *Mitscher* accomplishes this effectively in two weeks.

"Previously, you would check aboard and they would hand you a stack of PQS books, said Master Chief Electrician's Mate(SW) Ron Downs, Command Master

Chief. "It could take you from 3 to 6 months to get qualified. We've condensed this program down and combined it with our indoctrination division and the Sailor comes out of there ready to go to work."

During the ceremony *Mitscher's* commanding officer, Cmdr. Frank Pandolfe, presents each Sailor with the command's ball cap and allows them to sign their name to the ship's Mission and Vision Statement, which is mounted and displayed on the mess decks. The statement, arranged in the form of the ship's name, assigns worthy attributes such as mission, integrity and teamwork. The purpose of this formal procedure is to foster ownership of *Mitscher*.

"If you can get a Sailor to take ownership of something, See *Mitscher*, page 5

The tugs that could



Two tugs from Port Operations, Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Japan, assist USS *Kitty Hawk* (CV 63) as the aircraft carrier gets underway to perform sea trials off the coast of Japan. U.S. Navy photo.

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to-portal deployment policy," Johnson said. "The performance, mission execution and morale out forward should make us all very proud."

The non-deployed side of readiness still presents challenges, according to the CNO.

"We continue to work hard at unburdening our Sailors, empowering their commanding officers, and better resourcing the fleet as they execute their inter-deployment training cycle," Johnson said. "We're making some progress, but there's much, much more to do."

The CNO also updated the committee on the status of Navy recruiting and retention. "Recruiting is still a challenge for us. Though I'm pleased to report that we continue to make our monthly accession goals thus far this year, we are not making any real progress in increasing our delayed entry pool, that surge tank. This will not get any easier."

Regarding retention, the CNO told the committee members that there are signs of improvement.

"Enlisted retention is up two-to-four percent thus far this year for first and second

terms. And our Selective Reenlistment Bonus take rate is 26 percent above what we forecast for the year," Johnson said. "Surface Warfare Officers are now filling department head classes, where the classes have averaged only about half full for about the last three years. This is encouraging news."

The Armed Services Committees from both houses of Congress authorize the defense budget request each year. Johnson is scheduled to testify before the Senate Armed Services Committee next month.

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you take many of the negative comments that are made in the report and go back and bounce them against the testimony that was given, you'll find many of those concerns were adequately addressed."

However, West said, he's glad that the committee called DoD's program a well-intended effort and that the members recognized there is a legitimate threat.

"I would champion their proposal that we aggressively seek a better vaccine," he said. In fact, the general said, there's currently a funded, aggressive program under the supervision of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta to do just that.

"We also believe anything that we can do to improve the shot protocol would be a good thing," West said. "If you can

give this vaccination in less than six shots, you're probably going to have fewer reactions, and the fewer reactions we have the better it is."

West said DoD budgeted \$20 million in 1999 to work with the CDC and determine ways to improve the program. He said those efforts are in four areas: shot regimen, gender differences, method of delivering the vaccine, and determining the amount of immunity gained from the regimen.

But, he said, pending improvements shouldn't prevent DoD from using the best measures currently available.

"We should always want better medicine. We should always want to find a better vaccine. We should always want to find ways to administer it that are less invasive," West said.

"But those things take time. Those are months or years away, and we've got troops that

are in danger of aerosolized, weaponized anthrax today. We can't wait until we've got a new and improved vaccine to give them the protection they need."

Bailey agreed. "[Anthrax] is as deadly as Ebola," she said, explaining that anthrax is almost 100 percent deadly if not treated before symptoms develop.

She explained DoD requires service members to receive many vaccines that aren't voluntary.

"It is not only to protect the troops but to protect the effectiveness of the mission," Bailey said. She used the example of tetanus vaccine being required during World War II. "Although there were millions of wounds and casualties, we only had 12 cases of tetanus," she said.

"It's that kind of protection that medicine can afford to our troops, and we are intent upon providing that to them."

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he is a lot more productive and does a lot better," said Downs.

The initiative seems to be working. In 1999, the ship's retention rate for first-term Sailors was six points higher than the average for all of Naval Surface Force Atlantic Fleet's Arleigh Burke-class destroyers.

The DCU hands-on training also gives new Sailors a chance to learn life-saving skills in a stress-free environment.

"It makes me feel more confident knowing that I can help someone out in case of emergency," said recent DCU graduate Seaman Robert Delgado. "It makes me feel more helpful to the ship, more like a Sailor."

Learn more about *Mitscher* at <http://www.spear.navy.mil/ships/ddg57/>.

In naval history: March 3, 1915

The Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) was established by an Act of Congress. The CNO is the Navy's senior flag officer. He is the Navy's representative to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and keeps the Secretary of the Navy informed of all decisions and activities.

Submarine Centennial: Feb. 28, 1944

USS *Trout* (SS 202) was lost at sea on her 11th war patrol with all hands on board, after being spotted by a Japanese convoy.

The sub had a distinguished history in World War II but was known in particular for one mission. In 1942, *Trout* delivered ammunition and weapons to the South Pacific island of Corregidor, which was preparing for a Japanese attack. This delivery, however, reduced *Trout's* weight to the point of not being able to submerge. To counter this problem, *Trout* departed Corregidor with 20 tons of gold, silver and securities, protecting the U.S. booty and allowing the vessel to submerge and safely return to Pearl Harbor.

Trout is credited with sinking 23 enemy ships (87,000 tons). The sub was awarded 11 battle stars and the Presidential Unit Citation for its second, third and fifth war patrols.

For more information on the Submarine Centennial, go to <http://www.navy.mil> and click on "Submarine Centennial".

On Navy/Marine Corps News

Look for the following stories and more on next week's show:

* The Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) and Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps push for better benefits on Capitol Hill;

* The Chief of Naval Operations recognizes the achievements of a Navy civilian employee during the 2000 Black Engineer of the Year Awards;

* World War II Veterans gather with current Marines and Sailors to honor those who lost their lives in the Battle for Iwo Jima;

* New Sailors aboard USS *Mitscher* (DDG 57) learn about their new home with the help of an extensive indoctrination program.

Compiled on tape #2000-09, the show is on its way to the fleet now.

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